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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

One year after Asiana Airlines accident, San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center Hosted Panel Discussion on Past and Future Disaster Response

SAN FRANCISCO (July 1, 2014) – One year after the Asiana Airlines accident at San Francisco International Airport, **San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center** hosted a panel discussion on Monday, June 30, 2014 to reflect on the medical response that day and in the days that followed. The discussion highlighted how with the new hospital - opening December 2015 - The General and the Department of Public Health (DPH) will be even more prepared for the next time there is a disaster or multi-casualty incident.

The panelists included San Francisco General Hospital's Chief Nursing Officer **Terry Dentoni**, Interim Chief of Surgery **Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Knudson**, Medical Director of the Emergency Department **Dr. Malini Singh** and DPH's **Edwin Batongbacal**, Director of Adult Systems-of-Care, Behavioral Health Services of the San Francisco Health Network.

Focusing on the traumatic injuries suffered by the victims on Saturday, July 6, 2013, Dr. Margaret Knudson described the three waves of patients that were received at The General. Crash victims had multiple critical injuries, varying from organ damage, inhalation, spinal injuries, road burns and more.

"While we plan for disasters, a plane crash with survivors is extremely unique. Our team was focused on providing the best care for every patient under incredible circumstances," Knudson said. "It was a terrible day for so many, but also a proud day to be a member of the team that responded so well, saved lives and provided care to the injured."

On that day, nine hospitals admitted 182 patients, with the most critically injured sent to The General, the only trauma center serving San Francisco and northern San Mateo counties. All together, 67 (36 adults and 31 children) patients from the accident were treated at The General.

Terry Dentoni explained how the staff immediately gathered in the Command Center so that they could organize the hospital-wide response as patients moved from the emergency department to the operating rooms, intensive care units and inpatient beds. For example, the hospital opened up the pediatric clinic to handle overflow from the emergency department. Injured patients had lost their belongings, were separated from their families, and there were many cultural barriers to be considered. From the doctors and nurses, to the social workers, food service employees, materials and supplies staff and interpreter services, the entire staff at The General had to think outside of the box in order to treat the many needs of those victims, while still functioning as the City's only level-one trauma center. In addition to the 67 patients from the Asiana

Airlines disaster, The General saw an additional 319 non plane crash patients in the Emergency Department that weekend, while caring for 260 patients in the hospital.

“Every member of our staff went above and beyond to ensure that we did everything we could possibly do for all of our patients.” Dentoni said. “We did exactly what we are supposed to do, what we train to do, and what we do well – care for the people in our community.”

Physical injuries were only part of the problem. Edwin Batongbacal outlined the mental health support that was provided by the Department of Public Health in the days and week that followed. A total of 31 disaster mental health workers were deployed to meet with crash victims and their family members. They facilitated reunions at SFO after hospital care and stayed with passengers at the airport until they were able to get to their hotel rooms. With the disaster mental health workers fluent in various languages and pre-preparedness planning and exercises, DPH provided successful mental health care to the victims and their families.

Looking to the future, Dr. Malini Singh described how the new hospital currently under construction on the SFGH campus, will provide even better facilities for emergency response to any multi-casualty incidents. The Emergency Department will increase in size and feature more equipment to speed diagnosis and treatment. The amount of emergency treatment stations will double to 58, with the capability to surge up to 116 in a disaster event. The rooms will feature state-of-the-art monitors, lighting and examination tools. There will be 18 decontamination showers ready for use. The number of trauma rooms will increase from four to six, with two trauma CT scanners and two X-rays. The added imaging facilities will be dedicated to emergency patients, so they will not need to be relocated to a different part of the hospital for critical and time-sensitive diagnostics. Additionally, there will be three isolation rooms, four pediatric exam rooms and 10 specialty exam rooms.

“With the increased space and new technologies that the new hospital will offer, we are going to be even more prepared for anything that might come our way,” Singh said. “It’s going to be better. No question.”

Video: [The General Responds to the Asiana Airlines Accident](#)

Video: [B roll of current construction of the new Emergency Department](#)

Images: [Renderings of the Rebuild](#)

Images: [Construction Photos](#)

Additional information, including fact sheets about the new hospital and emergency department is available in the [Electronic Press Kit](#) (including B roll of current Emergency Department)

San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center (SFGH)

San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center is the sole provider of trauma and psychiatric emergency services for the City and County of San Francisco. A comprehensive medical center, SFGH serves some 100,000 patients per year and provides 20 percent of the city’s inpatient care. In 2011, SFGH became the first hospital in the country to be certified for a Traumatic Brain Injury program. As San Francisco’s public hospital, SFGH is a member of the San Francisco Health Network, an integrated delivery system operated by the Department of Public Health that provides all levels of care to San Franciscans. SFGH’s mission is to provide quality health care and trauma services with compassion and respect to patients that include the city’s most vulnerable. General Hospital is also one of the nation’s top academic medical centers, partnering with the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine on clinical training and research.